**Exploration by ONGC in Ramanathpuram in Taminadu**

191. SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Oil and Natural Gas Corporation did any test in Ramanathpuram Disrict in Tamilnadu to explore and exploit Petroleum products including natural gas; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT SATISH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Gas was struck in the well Ferungulam-1 in Ramanathpuram district of Tamil Nadu. Presently, one well Palkolam-1 is under drilling situated about 25 Kms. South East in Ramanathapuram.

**Amount alocated for conversion of Dindigul-Tiruchirapalli Route**

192. SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) how much amount has been allocated for conversion of metre gauge line to broad gauge during the last three years (year-wise) for Dindigul-Tiruchirapalli and Tiruchirapalli-Madras route; and

(b) how much amount has been spent for the above mentioned project during the same period?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha

**Discontinuation of Railway Claims Tribunals**

193 SHRI SANJAY DALMIA :
SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the places where the Railway Claims Tribunals have been discontinued and the reasons therefor, and

(b) the details of tribunals functioning so far, zone-wise?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF):

(a) None of the Railway Claims Tribunal Benches has been discontinued

(b) Zone-wise details of Tribunal Benches functioning at present are given below:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| East Zone | : | Calcutta, Guwahati, Patna Bhubaneswar and Gorakhpur. |
| West Zone | : | Bombay Nagpur and Ahmedabad. |
| North Zone | : | Delhi, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Bhopal. |
| South Zone | : | Madras, Bangalore, Ernakulam and Secunderabad. |

Accident of Bombay-Howrah Mail

194. SHRI O. P. KOHLI :
SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK :
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA :
DR. BAPU KALDATE:
SHRI RAM DEO BHANDARI :
SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of passengers were burnt alive in a sleeper coach of the Bombay-Howrah Mail on 26-10-94 in the South Eastern Railway's Chakradharpur division in Bihar;

(b) if so, whether the accident has been investigated and if so, with what details;

(c) the action taken to check such mishaps in future and the extent to which the railway officials are blameworthy to have failed to check the carrying of inflammable items in the trains; and

(d) the extent to which it is correct that over 100 passengers were travelling in the sleeper coach meant to accommopleased to state:

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Yes, Sir. There was an accident involving fire on a second class sleeper coach of 8001 Dn. Bombay-Howrah Mail between Lotapahar and Chakradharpur stations of Rourkela-Chakradharpur section of Chakradharpur division of South Eastern Railway on 26-10-94. 29 dead bodies were taken out from the fire affected coach. 4 passengers sustained grievous injuries and 13 others suffered simple injuries in the accident.

(b) Statutory inquiry into the accident is being conducted by the Commissioner of Railway Safety, South Eastern Circle, whose Final Report is awaited.

(c) The following steps have been taken to prevent similar accidents:—

(i) Educating the travelling public through public address system, newspapers, TV, radio and cinema slides, specially in regional languages, regarding dangers of carrying inflammable and explosive material on passenger trains.

(ii) Apprehending passengers, hawkers and vendors carrying inflammable materials on the trains.

(iii) Proper maintenance of electrical devices in the passenger coaches is ensured.

(iv) A pilot scheme called 'Instant Action Group', consisting of various staff, has been launched mainly for preventing unauthorised passengers entering reserved coaches, carriage of suspicious and inflammable articles and to take prompt action on complaints and grievances of passengers.

(v) Intensive checks are carried out at maintenance depots to ensure smooth working of the alarm chain apparatus in passenger carrying trains.

(vi) Provision of fire fighting arrangements at nominated locations in railway premises and trains.

The cause and responsibility for the fire on 8001 Dn. is under investigation and will be concluded by the Commissioner of Railway Safety. Action against railway staff held responsible, if any, will be taken on receipt of the Final Inquiry Report.

(d) 83 passengers were travelling including RAC passengers.

**Late running of North East Express**

195. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that once famous North East Express to and from Guwahati and New Delhi has of late become one of the most neglected train in the Railway set-up.

(b) what is the cause for regular inordinate delay in running this train; and

(c) whether Government would take immediate steps to regularise the train?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) to (c). The punctuality of 5621/5622 North-East Express has been affected in the recent past due to various reasons particularly the following:

(i) speed restrictions for the entire Assam region for security reasons,

(ii) detention of trains at Gossaigaonhat station by the Government of Assam for medical check-up of the incoming passengers on account of outbreak of plague in different parts of the country,

(iii) non-interlocked working at Guwahati in connection with the conversion of Guwahati-Lumding section into Broad Gauge,

(iv) single line system prevailing on N[illegible] Frontier Railway,